



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# HAPPY INDEPENDENCE!

For many the Fourth of July has become a holiday, a three-day weekend, or a day off from work.

Message from SDDVA Sec. Larry Zimmerman



The Fourth of July is a celebration - a celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, one of the most famous and cherished documents.

It's about celebrating the values that this country was founded upon.

It's about celebrating the ideals of democracy, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is a time for us to embrace the foundation this great country was built on and share this legacy with our children and our grandchildren.

It is a time for us to remember and honor those first Americans who made sacrifices to create this country and all those that have defended it.

Helen Kellar once said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

As we gather with friends and family this Fourth of July, let us all CELEBRATE our independence. Let us live up to John Adams' challenge to celebrate from one end of this great continent to the other."

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## ROSE JOINS SDDVA TEAM

Amy Rose, originally from Jacksonville, FL, is the newest member to the SDDVA Claims Office team. Amy has accepted the position of claims examiner.

Amy served four years of active duty Navy. Amy's husband, father, and uncle have all served active duty in the Navy and she has a sister-in-law that serves in the Air Force reserves.

Amy is currently attending business school and has worked in the social services arena for the past eight years.

When not serving veterans in South Dakota, Amy and her husband are busy with their three teenagers.

Please join us in welcoming Amy to our team!



## U.S. POSTAL SERVICE UNVEILS NEW CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR STAMP

The U.S. Postal Service and the Sioux Falls VA will unveiled the new Congressional Medal of Honor stamp Wednesday as the start of the Summer of Service VA open house.

Michael J. Fitzmaurice, a South Dakota Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, and his wife, Patti, attended the unveiling.

Those attending the unveiling were encouraged to explore opportunities to serve veterans as volunteers.

The Medal of Honor is the most prestigious military decoration and is awarded to service members who distinguish themselves through their bravery "at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty" while in combat against an enemy of the United States.

This stamp displays 48 surviving recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor from the Vietnam War, including Mr. Fitzmaurice.

Fitzmaurice received his Medal of Honor for his bravery at Khe Sanh, Vietnam. His citation reads in part, "...Although seriously wounded, Sp4c Fitzmaurice refused to be medically evacuated, preferring to remain at his post. Sp4c Fitzmaurice's extraordinary heroism in action at the risk of his life contributed significantly to the successful defense of the position and resulted in saving the lives of a number of his fellow soldiers. These actions of heroism go above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit on Sp4c Fitzmaurice and the U.S. Army."

## THOSE WHO HAVE CARRIED THE FLAG

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War the individual states were not united by a national government and they lacked a symbol that could unite them. Instead, there were many flags. An attempt to unite the states fighting for independence under a flag that held resemblance to Great Britain's was not successful. Instead, the Second Continental Congress determined it was time to part with Great Britain's emblem entirely and establish a new national symbol for a new nation.

One year after the Declaration of Independence was adopted the Second Continental Congress established a national flag. The resolution pronounced that "the flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternate red and white" and that "the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

Decades later, a conflict over slavery and state sovereignty erupted. The North and the South could no longer resolve their differences. Those in the South rejected the flag that had united the country since its origin. Southerners replaced the American flag with their own flags: three successive Confederate flags that would set their people apart from the United States.

Although the Civil War nearly tore our nation apart, we eventually emerged as a better and stronger nation. The tenets of the Declaration of Independence – that ALL men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights – could finally be realized with the elimination of slavery. And because of the Civil War, Americans began to fly the American flag. It wasn't until Northerners began displaying flags as a symbol of their allegiance and patriotism that it became commonplace for individuals to fly flags at their own homes.

By the time of World War II, the United States was among the most prosperous and prominent nations of the world. The country had grown and the flag then contained 48 stars. As a world superpower, the United States joined the fight against the Axis Powers and led the Allies to victory.

With the admission of Alaska and Hawaii to the union, our flag became what it is today – a flag with 50 stars. Today our flag represents the American way of life. It is a sign of relief, an emblem of hope and a symbol of freedom. The flag stands for the fight for independence, the triumph over slavery, the crushing of Nazism and the containment of communism.

This Independence Day, I hope you'll take the opportunity to thank the men and women who have worn the uniform of our United States, united under the flag of our nation. Because of them, and those who went before them, we won our independence, and are free.

Message from  
Gov. Daugaard



## BLACK HILLS CORP AWARDED EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office, announced June 25 that Black Hills Corporation of Rapid City, South Dakota, has been awarded the 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

Fifteen employers from across the nation received the prestigious award, the nation's highest honor given to employers for exceptional support of National Guard and Reserve employees.

"These outstanding employers have not only earned this award, they have earned this nation's gratitude," said Defense Secretary Ash Carter. "I am truly honored to recognize these 15 organizations for their unwavering support of our military men and women and their families. Their accomplishments are a vital piece of our national defense and a high standard toward which all employers of Guard and Reserve members should strive."

Black Hills Corporation was nominated for the award by Corey Virtue, an employee and Soldier in the South Dakota Army National Guard's 235th Military Police Company.

"Black Hills Corporation is honored to receive a 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award," said David Emery, the chairman, president and chief executive officer of Black Hills Corp. "The members of the National Guard and Reserve sacrifice much while serving and defending our country. As an employer, accommodating their military service is simply the right thing to do."

"Anytime I am doing something with the Guard, my supervisors are always supportive," said Virtue, who deployed to Afghanistan for nearly a year in 2013. "They sent care packages and were always checking up on my wife, who was pregnant with our fifth child, while I was gone."

The Black Hills Corporation earned the award for a number of reasons, including:

- Providing outstanding support to its military employees and their families during military leave.
- Making a yearlong commitment to a service member's family to provide meals or gift cards to local restaurants every Monday during his deployment. The company also helped the service member's family with yard work, childcare and snow removal.
- Providing computers to the National Guard unit to set up an Internet café to enhance communication with service members' families.
- Allowing deployed service members to continue to use their tuition assistance up to \$5,250 per year and the computer loan program.
- Maintaining regular communication with deployed service members through emails, cards and care packages.
- Recognizing military employees for their service and providing support to other military installations, veterans and military support organizations.

"Basically my family knows that Black Hills Corporation is on stand-by if anything goes wrong," said Virtue. "They are our second family. They make it easy to do what I love on the civilian side, by not taking away from my military career."

"This award reflects not only on our company's culture, but also on our employees' commitment to service, whether to our country as a member of the military, or to the energy customers and communities we serve," said Emery.

The 2015 Freedom Award recipients were selected from 2,960 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists for going far beyond what the federal law requires to support their military employees. The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996. These outstanding employers join an elite group of 205 previous recipients of the award.



## DAV DRIVER RETIRES

Belle Fourche volunteer Alvin Shaw recently retired at 90 years of age from his role as driver of the Butte County van for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

"I always liked to drive, and I was still a pretty good driver," Shaw said.

The van and driver are destined for two trips weekly to provide transportation for veterans to their doctor's appointments at Fort Meade Veterans Affairs Hospital. Shaw said some trips to Rapid City are also needed for appointments.

"They welcomed me and had me drive the next day," Shaw said when he spoke of his signing on as a volunteer.

Butte County Veterans Service Officer (VSO) Robert Wagner said Shaw started driving the van at its onset in the Northern Hills in January 2003. He said Shaw has logged 2,552 hours of service and 33,248 miles. He has transported 1,387 veterans for medical appointments.

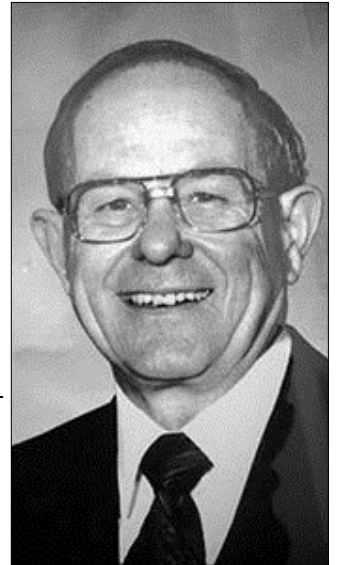
"I personally want to thank Mr. Shaw for the hours, miles, and advice he has given to his riders and me during this period," Wagner said.

Shaw served his country before he served his fellow veterans in Butte County. He was a B17 Ball Turret Gunner in World War II. He described it as being under the aircraft, shooting at fighter planes while they shot at you. In a six-month timeframe overseas, he flew 31 missions.

"I felt fortunate to escape without injury," Shaw said. "Every night we said a prayer of thanks."

Shaw says he wears a WWII cap that sports a medal for a clocked 1,000 hours served. His tour was out of England with flights over Germany.

Butte County Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Shaw and the service he provided the county throughout the years. His resignation with the county was effective May 21.



## LINDBLAD RETIRES FROM A CAREER OF ASSISTING OUR HEROES

Commissioners and staff from Beadle and Sanborn Counties hosted a farewell/thank you party for CVSO Ken Lindblad.

SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Bowen was on hand to commend Lindblad for his outstanding service and to share with Lindblad a letter of appreciation from SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman.

SDDVA would like to thank Ken, for his twenty plus years of outstanding service to our South Dakota veterans and for his mentoring of new VSOs.

We're going to miss you!



## HANSON NAMED AMERICAN LEGION STATE COMMANDER

Terry Hanson of Arlington, was elected as the State Commander of The American Legion Department of South Dakota by delegates attending the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention of The American Legion in Huron on Sunday, June 28. Hanson was nominated by Gary Henle of Sioux Falls, and his nomination was seconded by Leon Josephsen of Arlington. The American Legion is the largest war-time veteran service organization in South Dakota with over 21,000 members serving in 244 local American Legion Posts across the state.

Commander Hanson is a 20-year, Paid-Up-For-Life member of Edgar L. Herrick American Legion Post 42 in Arlington. He has held most Post offices, including Post Commander for four years. He served as Kingsbury County Commander, District Commander, State Vice Commander, State Membership Chairman for two years and also served as a member the Department Americanism Commission for four years. He also is presently a member of the National Americanism Council. Commander Hanson received the highest award presented to a Legionnaire for leadership abilities in 2013, the Robert C. Gabrielson award.

Commander Hanson enlisted in the South Dakota National Guard in 1969 and completed basic training and advanced individual training in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was a Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic. He served as a member of Company B, 153<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion in Madison, SD. Terry was honorably discharged in 1976 with the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Terry graduated high school from Rutland High School in 1969 and holds the school record for being the only student to participate in the State Wrestling Tournament. He is a certified wrestling referee and has refereed in tournaments for 23 years. He is currently retired from Hunter Engineering where he worked for 28 years. Commander Hanson and his wife, Trudy, have been married for 34 years and reside at 313 Park Drive, Arlington, SD 57212. They are members of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Arlington. Trudy is also a member of The American Legion Auxiliary. They have three children and three grandchildren.

In other convention action, the assembled delegates elected two State Vice Commanders for the organization. Those elected were Ken Orrock of Rapid City and Gary Henle of Sioux Falls. Paul Evenson of Sioux Falls was re-elected as National Executive Committeeman and Jim Huls of Madison was re-elected as Alternate National Executive Committeeman. Verle Whipple of Clear Lake was re-elected as the Department Sergeant-At-Arms.

Commander Hanson appointed Dennis Brenden of Watertown to a two-year appointment as Department Adjutant; Ken Teunissen of Sioux Falls to a one-year term as Department Membership Chairman; Dennis Brenden of Watertown to a one-year term as Public Relations Officer; James Sword of Hot Springs to a three-year term as Judge Advocate and Patrick Lewellen of Spearfish to a one-year term as Department Chaplain.

Fred Nelson of Spearfish was elected to a four year term as a member of The American Legion State Finance Commission.

Jerald Fox was selected as The American Legion Department of South Dakota Legionnaire of the Year at the convention. Jerald is a member of George A Fitzgerald Post 65 of Dell Rapids.

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## HANSON NAMED AMERICAN LEGION STATE COMMANDER (CONTINUED)

The Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award was presented to Gary Henle of Sioux Falls, SD. The Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award is named in the memory of Past American Legion State Commander Robert C. Gabrielson of Hoven, SD. Gabrielson served in numerous leadership capacities for The American Legion at the local Post, District, State and National levels. The award is to recognize one Legionnaire on an annual basis for sustained, superior, and inspirational leadership.

Special guests at this year's American Legion convention included Senator John Thune, Senator Michael Rounds, Congresswoman Krisi Noem, Adjutant General Tim Reich, Miss South Dakota Autumn Simunek, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Larry Zimmerman, First Veterans Court presiding Judge Robert Spears and many more guests.

Congresswoman Krisi Noem presented Donald Hausmann of Bonesteel American Legion Post 36 with his Purple Heart for injuries suffered during the Korean War.

## AMERICAN LEGION POST 22 HONORS FALLEN HEROES

In its 40th year, the American Legion Post 22 annual Firecracker baseball tournament in Rapid City, has a long and rich history. And likely a few different official names along the way.

This year Rapid City Post 22 has themed their tournament, "A Tribute to Heroes." As such, they will be hosting South Dakota's Fallen Heroes banner display and will be honoring these individuals during the tournament.

HIT,  
RUN,  
SCORE!!!!



Jerry Duba, Committee Chair for the Fallen Heroes Banners exhibit, was on hand to throw the opening pitch for the tournament.



# Upcoming Events

Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
Jul. 15—SD Veterans Council—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am  
Aug. 5-9—AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls (Sanford Pentagon Sports Complex)  
Aug. 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre  
Sept. 11 — Stand Down—Wagner—National Guard Armory—9:00 am—1:00 pm  
Sept. 18—POW-MIA Ceremony—Sioux Falls  
Sept. 18—Ellsworth AFB Retiree Appreciation Day— Exhibits 9:00 am—3:00 pm (MDT)—Luncheon 11:00 am—1:00 pm (MDT) - EAFB  
Oct. 5—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
Oct. 10—DAV Fall Conference—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls  
Dec. 8— Governor's Budget Address—Pierre

## 2016

Jan. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
Jan. 12—SD Legislative Session Opens—Pierre  
Jan. 14—Veterans Legislative Breakfast—Pierre  
Jan. 27-28—State Tribal Relations Days—Pierre  
Apr. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
April 15-17—DAV Convention—Rapid City  
Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

Please note —

State offices will be closed  
July 3.



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